

**New Road Projects Reduce Traffic Congestion**  
**Council President Scott Peters, First District**  
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Long-time residents of this area have witnessed tremendous change in San Diego over the past 20 years. Our evolution from a sleepy Navy town to a thriving metropolis gave rise to a world-class technology sector, residential housing boom and unfortunately, the traffic congestion that goes along with that kind of growth. For too long, public officials and planners approached the problem backwards—building homes before roads. Remember how long it took to complete State Route 56? Today San Diego approaches growth holistically, building roads and other infrastructure along with the homes they serve.

Luckily, our evolution has not escaped the attention of our state and federal officials. Historically, when it came to property and transportation tax allocations, San Diego received the short end of the political stick compared to our more sophisticated northern cousins. Our recent success in securing our fair share of transit grant money is a welcome reversal of that trend.

While San Diego comprises 8% of the state's population, we secured 11% of the funds recently distributed by the California Transportation Commission ("CTC"). San Diego County received \$451.5 million to fund critical transportation projects throughout the region, nearly \$150 million more than originally recommended by the commission staff.

The money comes from Proposition 1B, passed overwhelmingly by California voters last year. The measure authorized the state to sell nearly \$20 billion in bonds dedicated to transportation projects aimed at relieving traffic congestion, and allocated money among the state's 58 counties. San Diego's share of the Prop 1B money goes toward High Occupancy Vehicle lanes on Interstates 15 and 805, including four new managed lanes on I-15 between 163 and State Route 56. Combined with the expansion of I-15 and its commuter lanes north of SR-56, this project will reduce congestion and improve the commute for thousands of residents.

Much credit goes to Mayor Jerry Sanders and my Council colleague Jim Madaffer, who traveled to Los Angeles with a delegation from San Diego to make the case before the CTC. Councilman Madaffer even put on a hard hat and orange vest and appeared before the commission with a shovel, declaring that San Diego was "ready to get to work." His theatricality and enthusiasm earned him a prominent place in the next day's *Los Angeles Times* and I think, tacked on a few extra million for San Diego.

Another transportation project benefiting North City residents is the recent completion of the southbound bypass lanes at the I-5/805 merge, the final piece of a massive \$176 million undertaking by CalTrans. Five years in the making, the project expanded one of Southern California's busiest freeways and created dedicated bypass lanes to ease transitions between I-5 and State Route 56.

We still have much work to do to alleviate congestion and improve mobility. These projects, along with upcoming improvements to our public transit system, are significant steps in a long-term process. I look forward to sharing more good news with you as San Diego pursues additional state and federal transportation grants.